

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A stereoscopic observation system comprising:
a stereoscopic optical unit provided with a pair
of objectives for stereoscopic observation and optical
5 devices corresponding to the respective objectives;
a stereoscopic camera connected to the stereo-
scopic optical unit, and used to pick up optical images
formed by the optical devices, at least one of the
stereoscopic camera and the optical unit serving as an
10 instrument to be supported;
a support unit which supports the instrument; and
a rotation mechanism incorporated in the support
unit, the rotation mechanism having a rotary shaft
substantially parallel to an optical axis of the
15 objectives, the rotation mechanism supporting the
instrument such that the instrument can rotate about an
axis of the rotary shaft.
2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
rotation mechanism has limiting means of a frictional
20 resistance type which applies a frictional force to the
rotary shaft when the instrument is rotated, thereby
limiting rotation of the instrument.
3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
support unit has at least one joint portion and
25 engagement means to be engaged with the at least one
joint portion mechanically and disengageably, and the
rotation mechanism has an independent rotary portion

which can rotate even if the engagement means is mechanically engaged with the at least one joint portion of the support unit.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
5 rotary shaft of the rotation mechanism is substantially coaxial with the optical unit.

5. The system according to claim 1, wherein the support unit incorporates a plurality of rotation mechanisms similar to the first-mentioned rotation
10 mechanism.

6. The system according to claim 1, wherein the optical unit is a stereoscopic endoscope.